

Application No.: 10/765,113
Art Unit: 3764

Attorney Docket No. 24076.00
Confirmation No. 9697

REMARKS

By the present amendment, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 10 and 13, and canceled Claims 5-9, 14 and 15. Claims 1-4 and 10-13 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1, 10 and 13 are independent claims.

In the recent Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-2, 5 and 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Melby (U.S. Patent No. 4,705,028). Claims 1-3 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Calafato (U.S. Patent No. 6,572,514). Claims 1-4 were apparently intended to be rejected by the Examiner under --35 U.S.C. § 103(a)-- as being unpatentable over Calafato in view of Homyonfer (U.S. Patent No. 5,755,651). Claims 1, 8 and 9 were under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Melby. The Examiner indicated that Claims 7, 10, 11 and 15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and of any intervening claims.

The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation. In this regard, Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of Claim 7 and intervening Claims 5 and 6. Also, allowable Claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form, and independent Claim 13 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of Claim 15. The incorporated claims have been canceled and Claims 8-9 and 14 have been canceled in the interest of consistency. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1,

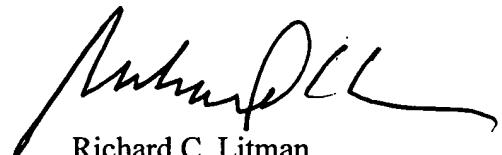
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10 and 13, as amended, and corresponding dependent Claims 2-4, 11 and 12 are allowable over the prior art of record.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. If such is not the case, the Examiner is requested to kindly contact the undersigned in an effort to satisfactorily conclude the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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RCL:DHT